

LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY FOR: MAY 12, 1997

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LAST WEEK:

SENATE EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING-

On Thursday, May 8th, the Senate cleared the supplemental appropriations bill, S. 672. Members agreed to the final contents of the bill in a 78-22 vote on its "third reading". Senate leaders have announced that the body will wait until the House passes a version before voting on final passage of S. 672, which could be done under unanimous consent. In its current form, S. 672 provides for \$171 million for the Emergency Watershed Program, including \$20 million available for floodplain easements. (See the May 5th Legislative Summary for a comparison between H.R. 1469 and S. 672.)

CRP EXTENSION DIES IN SENATE-

Following House passage of H.R. 1342, introduced by Bob Smith (R-OR), Senate leaders have decided not to take up the measure. Any extension to the CRP was under threat of veto by the President. USDA will be notifying producers of eligibility in a couple of weeks, nullifying the rationale for the legislation.

ENDANGERED SPECIES/FLOOD MEASURE RECEIVED HOUSE FLOOR CONSIDERATION-

H.R. 478, sponsored by Reps. Wally Herger and Richard Pombo (R-CA), was considered by the House last week. While the bill in its original form was not passed by the chamber, an alternative offered in the nature of a substitute by Rep. Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY) was presented and passed by the House. House Resources Committee Chairman, Don Young (R-AK) subsequently withdrew the bill before final House consideration. A second measure, similar to the Boehlert amendment, is contained in the Senate version of the supplemental appropriations.

LEGISLATION OF NOTE-

The following bill was introduced of significance to NRCS and conservation:

Bill	Member	Purpose
H.R. 1489	Condit (D-CA)	To establish permanent authority for assistance to small orchardists to replace or rehabilitate trees and vineyards damaged by natural disasters.

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THIS WEEK:

EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING-

On Tuesday, the House Rules Committee will meet to set the timeframe and process for consideration of H.R. 1469. The House could possibly take floor action as early as Wednesday. This would send the bill to conference for reconciliation with a Senate version of the spending bill. Therefore, conference action on emergency supplemental appropriations could begin by the end of the week.

USDA PHONE AND COMPUTER SYSTEMS-

Department Operations, Nutrition and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee (Chairman Goodlatte, R-Va.) of the House Agriculture Committee will hold a hearing on USDA's information technology procurement practices. The hearing will focus on complaints about the Department's phone and computer systems.

May 14 1:00 p.m. 1302 Longworth Building
Deputy Secretary Richard Rominger

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LOOKING AHEAD:

MEMORIAL DAY RECESS-

The Senate has tentatively set May 24-June 1 as its next congressional recess . The House has May 22-June 2 marked on its tentative schedule to be in recess.

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